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SUBJECT: TIBET: MFA COMPLAINS ABOUT CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission William
Weinstein. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a March 11 meeting with A/DCM, the MFA protested a recently introduced House of Representatives resolution on Tibet and urged the administration to prevent its passage. Noting that the U.S. Congress is a separate branch of government, A/DCM replied that the United States is concerned about the situation in Tibet, particularly Chinese policies' harmful impact on Tibetan language, culture and religion. A/DCM protested the recent detention in Gansu of two New York Times reporters and the deportation of two American citizens from Chengdu and urged China to allow foreign journalists and diplomats to visit Tibetan areas. End Summary.

MFA COMPLAINS ABOUT CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION

¶2. (C) MFA North American and Oceanian Affairs Department Acting Director General Deng Hongbo called in A/DCM March 11 to protest H. Res 226 on the plight of the Tibetan people. Deng said the legislation "distorts history, vilifies Chinese policy, embellishes the Dalai Lama's actions, makes unreasonable demands, turns black into white, represents a gross interference in China's internal affairs and undermines Sino-U.S. relations." The Chinese Government "is strongly dissatisfied" with the legislation, he added. Tibet was an inalienable part of China's territory, and therefore Tibetan issues were all China's internal affairs. China firmly opposed foreign government actions to take advantage of "the Dalai issue" to interfere in China's internal affairs, Deng said.

¶3. (C) As part of a lengthy discourse on Tibetan history rich with vivid imagery, Deng argued that prior to 1959, Tibet had been "darker than Europe in the Middle Ages." After China took "decisive measures to quell rebellion," there emerged in Tibet a "mass democratic movement." Deng characterized this "democratic movement" as the "most significant democratic reform in the history of Tibet and a great advance in human civilization and the promotion of human rights." People of all ethnic groups displayed great enthusiasm for the democratic reforms, Deng intoned, "achieving great economic and social gains, and protecting human rights, religious freedom and Tibetan culture." "The Dalai and his clique," Deng continued reading, "never stopped trying to restore feudal serfdom, changing black into white and whitewashing history to paint Tibet as Shangri-la."

¶4. (C) Enumerating "the Dalai's crimes," Deng said the Dalai Lama had created a Tibetan government-in-exile with the "so-called" Dalai Lama at its head and had made plans for "a greater Tibet that never

existed in Chinese history, which would occupy more than one quarter of China's territory." In addition, he said, "the Dalai dared" to call for the withdrawal of the People's Liberation Army from Tibetan areas.

15. (C) Reading with expression and emotion, Deng continued: "The fight with the Dalai Clique is not over autonomy. It is a struggle between progress and reaction, between unity and separation." He granted that the U.S. recognition of Tibet as a part of China was of great importance but added the admonition that "China follows your actions as well as your words." The "small number of U.S. Congressmen" who had put forward this resolution were trying to "disrupt the minds of the people, sabotage Chinese stability and undermine Sino-U.S. relations." Their efforts, Deng declared, "are doomed to failure."

16. (C) Non-interference was the crux of the sound development of Sino-U.S. relations, Deng said, noting that relations had already gotten off to a good start in the new U.S. administration. "Maintaining the momentum of relations served the common interest but also required common efforts," he stated. Consequently, China requested that the United States take Chinese concerns seriously, understand the severity and harm of the resolution and take concrete action to "realize the commitment that Tibet is a part of China" by preventing the resolution from passing and blocking a similar

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resolution from being considered in the U.S. Senate.

17. (C) A/DCM advised Deng that the U.S. Congress was a separate branch of government, and that the executive branch had neither the right nor the ability to "block" a resolution in either the House or the Senate. A/DCM reiterated the U.S. position that Tibet is a part of China but noted that the United States was deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Tibet and believed the current situation represented a violation of global human rights standards, particularly the increasing cultural and religious persecution in Tibetan areas.

18. (C) A/DCM noted that the level of interest in and sympathy for the Tibetan people was high in the United States, and that the reaction of the U.S. Congress to the news coming out of Tibet demonstrated this domestic interest. This was a reflection of American public opinion, which was a consideration that China should keep in mind when it closed off large parts of China to foreign travelers, including the journalists and diplomats who could provide an objective account of conditions in Tibetan areas. The detention of two New York Times reporters in Gansu for 20 hours was a case in point. This kind of action, taken in apparent violation of Chinese law, harmed China's image abroad, particularly in the United States. Actions such as the recent deportation of two American citizens in Chengdu were also harmful to China's image in the United States.

19. (C) China should focus on the welfare of the people of Tibet and respect their rights, including their rights to linguistic, cultural and religious expression, A/DCM continued. China should engage in serious dialogue with the Dalai Lama and his representatives and make an effort to bring about real solutions to the longstanding grievances of the people of Tibet, A/DCM told Deng.

¶10. (C) Deng retorted that the situation in Tibet was stable, the economy was improving and the lives of the people improved day by day. China had protected "basic human rights" in Tibet and protected the Tibetan people themselves. There had been no repression in Tibet, and anyone familiar with "the way things were in Tibet" would see now how much change there had been and how much things had improved. Regarding the U.S. complaints of treatment of U.S. citizens, including decisions on where and how diplomats and journalists could travel, Deng said, "Tibet is a part of China, and like any sovereign country, China can take any measure to safeguard social stability and protect the people's fundamental rights." China welcomed foreign observers to Tibetan areas, he said, "but not if they are biased." China accepted dialogue and exchange with foreigners, Deng went on, "but we will not accept so-called 'judges'." He offered a tortured analogy between China's actions in Tibet and treatment of Native Americans in the United States, saying "we know who did a better job."

¶11. (C) With regard to the Dalai Lama, Deng said "the door is still open, but we believe 'the Dalai's' intent is to restore the feudal system under the banner of so-called autonomy." The Dalai Lama needed to give up the idea of independence masquerading as autonomy, Deng said. If he gave up separatism, anything was possible.

¶12. (C) Deng closed with the "observation" that in the past, the U.S. executive branch had been able to influence legislation. "We know that if you take something seriously, it can work out," he said.

¶13. (C) "Democracy is real," A/DCM responded, "and Congress reflects U.S. opinion. China could take steps to improve its image in the eyes of the American public by improving conditions for the Tibetan people, allowing journalists to travel and report and being transparent about the situation in Tibet."

COMMENT

¶14. (C) MFA U.S. Division staff who set up this meeting told us explicitly that they were under "very severe pressure from high levels" to do this demarche before noon on March 11, and to do so in a

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face-to-face meeting (rather than a phone call) with the Charge d'Affaires or A/DCM. U.S. Division staff noted that this demarche was being handled by the Fifth Division of the North American and Oceanian Affairs Department, with which the Embassy has only occasional contact. The Fifth Division normally deals with exchanges at the state and local level but is also responsible for issues relating to the U.S. Congress. U.S. Division staff admitted that they did not write the demarche text, which contained notably more stylistic flourishes than typical MFA demarches.

BIO NOTE

¶15. (C) In February, MFA U.S. Division officials revealed that Acting DG Deng Hongbo had been "quite ill and in the hospital" for "some time." In today's meeting with A/DCM, Deng did not look well. He appeared thinner and did not use his left arm, which hung limp when he greeted and said goodbye to the A/DCM. When Deng stood up after the meeting, he

was stooped forward and only walked the A/DCM as far
as the door of the meeting room.
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